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ABSTRACT

This research originated with the idea that a relationship exists between the culture-specific way of thinking on the one hand and the use of language in special contexts on the other, affecting both meaning and text structure. The goal of the research is to create an interlingual text corpus representing a special type of text that appears in different languages and different cultures. The text corpus (television news from East Germany, West Germany, Soviet Union, and the United States) and the research methodology, which involved charting text patterns and their indicators, are described. Text type and text pattern are the basic theoretical concepts used in the classification of empirical data. (JP)

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Sign, language and ritual. Contrastive discourse analysis of East German and Soviet TV news.

CHRISTIANE PANKOW

Abstract

The starting-point of this research is the idea that a certain relation exists between the culture-specific way of thinking on the one hand and the use of language in special contexts on the other, affecting not only the meaning but also the text structure. I want to create an interlingual text corpus representing a special type of text that appears in different languages and different cultures. It consists of the TV news from four different countries: Aktuelle Kamera (DDR 1, GDR), Tagesschau (ARD, West Germany), Vremya (Horizont, Soviet Union), and Headline News (CNN, USA). The goal is to chart text models of the TV news and their different indicators. I have shown in earlier work that different types of texts with special communicative functions tend towards syntactic-semantic patterning. I think this also will be valid for TV news texts. In this context, I use text type and text pattern as basic theoretical concepts in the classification of empirical data. Furthermore, I assume that some semiotic properties distinguish the text type TV news from others and that they exert normative influence on the linguistic form.

The goal of this analysis is not a context-free investigation of natural language, but a functional text analysis. The classification units are morphologically and syntactically determined and seem suitable for a semantic-functional interpretation of linguistic markers.

1. Introduction

I would like to mention at the start that the title above refers to a comprehensive research project for the empirical investigation of the texts of TV news broadcasts. The work on the text material has only just begun. In the present paper I will point out some difficulties that arise during the empirical investigation of a specific text corpus. Even at a very early stage I ran into a confusion of the empirical exploration of complex data and facts with the theoretical interpretation of these data and facts, a confusion that so far has not been sufficiently discussed. I will give a brief outline of the goal of my investigation.

The starting-point of this research is the idea that a certain relation exists between the culture-specific way of thinking on the one hand and the use of language in special contexts on the other, affecting not only the meaning but also the text structure (Eco, 1988: 189-194). I want to create an interlingual text corpus representing a special type of text that appears in different languages and different cultures. The corpus consists of TV news from four different countries: *Aktuelle Kamera*, East Germany, *Tagesschau*, West Germany, *Vremya*, Soviet Union, and *CNN Headline*

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News, USA. The goal is to chart the text pattern of the TV news and their different indicators.

The building up of the text corpus itself involves a considerable amount of work. The material is based on video recordings of the abovementioned four TV news programmes, recorded during three week-long periods starting in May, 1989. The last recording was made in October, 1990. All in all, my corpus will consist of about 190,000 words of running text. A text corpus has the advantage of offering a finite amount of concrete linguistic utterances, able to serve as the empirical basis for investigation. However, there already exist a number of text corpora in various languages. What distinguishes my corpus from others, for instance, those used in the analysis of running text within computational linguistics (Ejerhed, 1988), are its particular pragmatic properties. It is an interlingual text corpus, representing a special text type. In this text type, linguistic patterns are influenced by very similar extralinguistic factors. The temporal separation of the recording periods allows me to show how changes in these extralinguistic text-constituting factors are reflected in the textual structure of *Aktuelle Kamera* and *Vremya*.

2. Theoretical considerations

The goal of my investigation is to work out a *text pattern* for each TV news, with significant text linguistic features. In this context, I use *text type* and *text pattern* as basic theoretical concepts in the classification of empirical data. The existence of text types as well as linguistic descriptions of them and differentiation of text types by means of linguistic criteria have been treated within text linguistic research, but no clear-cut criteria for distinguishing different text types have been developed. In brief terms, I see the main problem as residing in precipitated theorizing. Text types were prematurely abstracted from the empirical level, and at the same time, the analysis of "empirically given communicational processes, wherein ... knowledge of types plays a part" (Gülich, 1986: 17) was neglected.

Looking away for a while from text linguistics to other linguistic disciplines, namely those using quantitative methods in describing texts, we find a fairly clear concept of the communicative organization of language. I am thinking of statistical linguistics as a quantitative method for text classification and text typology (Pankow, 1978). So far, statistical linguistics has been most successful in LSP studies. The highest degree of success has been achieved in the investigation of scientific and technical sub-languages at the lexical level. As is well known, statistical linguistic research, which mainly concerns itself with LSP, divides language into sub-languages (Hoffmann et al. 1979: 156). So far, this theoretical approach has received little

attention outside of LSP studies - unjustly so, in my view. To statistical linguists, special-purpose languages are so many sub-languages. This means that the various sub-languages of a language are characterized by different communicative content. Each text can be assigned to a sub-language according to its communicative content. As far as linguistic features are concerned, these are assigned secondary importance as criteria for the classification, i.e. within one and the same sub-language, a variety of linguistic feature structures can appear. It seems possible to me to place the concept sub-language on a par with that of text type. Also, each text type can exhibit different text patterns. This means that a text typology based on clear-cut criteria is not possible. Sub-languages and text types are variable communicative units.

One could also say that the classification of a language system into sub-systems or text types presupposes a classification of the world. The text linguist, out to describe a particular text corpus, has intuitively classified the communicative and partly the semiotic properties of his text material. I would like to illustrate this point as it applies to my TV news corpus. I will assume that the text type TV news exhibits some properties which I will henceforth term semiotic. (The reason for calling them semiotic will not be dwelt upon here.) Furthermore, I assume that these semiotic properties (Rozhdestvensky, 1975) distinguish this text type from others and that they exert normative influence on the linguistic form of the texts.

Figure 1.

SEMIOTIC FEATURE	TEXT					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
truth value	+	+	+	+	+	-
specific communicative intention	-	-	-	-	-	-
collective text producer	+	+	+	+	(-)	-
short period of validity	+	+	+	+	-	-
time and place constraint	+	+	+	+	-	-
text continuation	+	+	+	+	-	-
topical presupposition	+	+	+	+	(-)	(-)

I. AKTUELLE KAMERA (EAST GERMANY)
II. TAGESSCHAU (WEST GERMANY)
III. VREMYA (SOVIET UNION)
IV. HEADLINE NEWS (USA)
V. SCIENTIFIC PAPER (NONCLASSICAL LOGIC)
VI. TOLSTOY: WAR AND PEACE

It is easily seen that the TV news texts form a well-defined block of semiotic properties within the matrix, while the scientific text and the literary text are clearly separated from them. The selected semiotic properties are not universal in the sense of a text typology (if there is such a thing as a text typology); they are part of the basic assumption that certain extralinguistic text-constituting factors are reflected in text structure. In any case, it is all but impossible to show concretely which linguistic feature is called forth by a given semiotic property.

From the feature TRUTH VALUE follows that sentences with certain information content are not permitted in TV news. E.g., the sentence "Gorbachev is doing a tour of his Scandinavian colonies" is not only FALSE, but simply non-occurring in TV news. As far as TRUTH VALUE is concerned, the viewer is expecting only true information, a property which TV newscasts share with scientific texts, though the verification procedures for the two text types have differing pragmatic consequences.

The semiotic features COLLECTIVE TEXT PRODUCER, SHORT PERIOD OF VALIDITY, and TIME AND PLACE CONSTRAINT are in my view the ones chiefly responsible for the patterning visible in individual TV texts:

1. The TV text is produced and/or edited by several authors, who are generally unknown to the recipient. This collectivity and anonymity of the text producers tends to homogenize the linguistic means of expression in the texts. The linguistic form is shaped to a uniform pattern.

2. In contrast to other text types, TV newscasts exhibit the semiotic property of being temporally and spatially constrained. The broadcasts are received at a fixed point in time, and simultaneously by many recipients (the number of which remains limited).

3. The text is valid only at the moment of broadcast - after that it can no longer be used, at least not in its original function. It is no longer authentic.

3. Method

The analysis of the texts will be completed in two phases: In the first phase, to arrive at what are probably four significant text patterns, the running text will be rewritten using the following units of classification:

N noun
NN proper name, title
A adjective
V verb form

AD adverb
K conjunction
P preposition
AR article

The method of analyzing a running text morphologically, syntactically, and semantically originates within computational linguistics. However, the goal of my analysis is not context-free but should form the basis for a text-functional investigation. The suggested units of classification are morphologically-syntactically determined, but permit inferences into the functional-semantic field for the subsequent detection of pattern-marking features in news texts. The advantage of such a complete registration of the text corpus is that in this way, I can avoid having to make a subjective selection of apparently significant text features right away.

The discourse analysis of unrestricted text looks as follows:

> Den/AR/ konstruktiven /A/ und /K/ weitreichenden /A/ Initiativen /N/ der /AR/ Sowjetunion /NN/ für /R/ Frieden /N/, Abrüstung /N/ und /K/ Entspannung /N/ gelte /V/ die /AR/ volle /A/ Unterstützung /N/. (*Aktuelle Kamera*, May 1989)

After this, in the second phase, a quantitative analysis of the texts will follow, wherein e.g. frequency and distribution of the different classification units will be calculated. I will show a small sample from already executed classifications of running text. In particular, two recordings of the East German TV news (May '89, Jan '90), one West German (May '89) and one Soviet newscast (Jan '90) are striking.

(1) Aktuelle Kamera/East Germany (8 May, 1989)

...P-N-NN-NN-NN-NN-A-N-AR-A-N-AD-AR-N-P-A-N-V-AR-NN-NN-NN-AD-P-A-N-AR-N-AR-NN-N-P-N-AR-A-N-P-N-K-N-N-AR-N-K-N-P-AR-AD-K-A-N-PR-P-NN-A-N-V-AR-N-K-N-V-P-AR-N-AR-A-N-P-AR-A-NN-AR-NN-AR-NN-K-NN-AR-NN-AR-NN-NN-NN-P-PR-NN-NN-NN-NN-NN-NN-NN-NN-NN-NN-NN-NN-NN-NN-NN-AR-NN-NN-NN-NN-AR-N-AR-A-A-N-P-NN-NN-PR-P-A-N-NN-V-NN-NN-NN-NN-AR-N-AR-NN-N-P-NN-K-NN-NN-NN-NN-AR-NN-K-NN-AR-NN-NN-N...

(2) Aktuelle Kamera/East Germany (2 January, 1990)

...AR-N-AR-N-V-AD-K-P-N-AR-N-V-AR-N-V-P-AR-A-N-P-AR-A-N-P-A-N-P-P-N-P-NN-AD-P-A-N-V-NN-NN-AR-NN-N-P-AR-N-P-A-NN-N-P-N-PR-V-A-K-P-N-AR-A-A-N-A-N-A-N-V-V-NN-NN-NN-K-A-N-NN-NN-PR--V-P-AR-A-N-P-N-V-PR-P-A-N-P-AR-A-N-AD-V-P-PR-N-AR-A-N-P-A-N-V-P-N-PR-V-PR-AR-A-N-AR-N-P-N-P-AR-AD-A-N-V-PR-PR-AD-AR-AD-A-N-P-A-N-V-A-N-P-AR...

(3) Tagesschau/West Germany (8 May, 1989)

...N-P-A-N-V-AD-K-P-N-K-AD-P-N-V-AR-N-AR-N-V-A-AD-AR-N-AR-N-V-AD-A-V-AR-N-P-AR-N-NN-V-PR-AD-P-N-AD-V-AD-K-AR-N-NN-N-V-V-AR-NN-NN-V-A-N-V-PR-AR-N-NN-AD-V-V-AR-N-A-N-V-PR-K-AD-AR-N-V-AR-P-NN-V-N-AD-P-V-A-N-V-PR-AD-V-K-AR-PR-P-AR-A-NN-N-AR-N-P-A-N-V-P-AR-A-A-N-P-A-N-V-V-AR-V-A-N-P-N-V-V-AR-PR-AD-AD-AD-V-V-AD-V...

(4) Vremya/USSR (24 January, 1990)

...A-N-N-A-N-P-PR-N-V-N-P-NN-K-A-N-PR-V-P-N-V-PR-N-P-A-A-N-P-A-N-AD-P-NN-A-N-A-N-N-P-A-N-V-AD-A-N-P-N-N-A-N-AD-V-P-N-N-AD-N-AD-V-V-K-PR-V-V-AD-AD-N-V-P-PR-N-P-N-N-AD-PR-D-V-P-PR-N-V-PR-N-V-A-N-N-P-N-V-AD-AD-AD-V-PR-PR-AD-AD-AD-AD-AD-V-P-PR-A-N-A-N-AD-P-PR-K-N-A-N-AD-A-P-PR-A-N-A-N-N-A-N-P-N-PR-V-P-A-N-V-N-AD-V-N-PR-P-N-A-...

4. Preliminary observations

It is still too early to say anything about significant features. However, each broadcast is predicted to exhibit a significant pattern. At this point I would like to take up one interesting observation. The first recording of the *Aktuelle Kamera* is already a historic text. It will in all probability be possible to give it an unambiguous description with the help of a few characteristics. As is easily seen, in line after line we get almost exclusively the classes N and NN. The N-class includes all nouns, while the class NN includes proper names of people and places as well as titles. Even in the absence of quantitative measures to prove the point, we can say that the NN frequency seems to be above average. The use of proper names and titles in particular is strictly conventional and symbolic; symbolic, in that the proliferation of NNs represents political power; conventional, in that the use of NNs unambiguously identifies the text type. The use of names and titles was predetermined by an agreement within the collective author, i.e. governed by extralinguistic norms. This normative constraint is an important pattern-marking feature of text 1, while in text 2, this feature seems no longer significant. In any case, the frequency is clearly lower, even though it is higher than in texts 3 and 4. The Soviet news exhibits almost no NNs.

Together with the proliferation of NNs in text 1 there appears another feature, partly present also in text 2, the second sample of East German TV news. In the commentary, there is a high frequency of elliptical sentences, lacking either a finite

verb or any predicate at all. An absence of Vs is partly demonstrable also in text 2, but far less so. This is not a feature governed by extralinguistic features, and appears only in conjunction with the proliferation of NNs. In texts 3 (*Tagesschau*) and 4 (*Vremya*) we seem to have the opposite: a domination of verbs and adverbs. It seems possible to bring out a polarization between abnormally frequent use of the N- and NN-classes on the one hand, and a high frequency of use of verb-adverb combinations on the other. The collective author apparently starts out from a *text template*, the pattern-marking features of which may be brought out through the investigation of a large text corpus.

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